



Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice

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**Testimony of Sharon E. Lewis
Before the Energy and Technology Committee
Re: HB 6022, An Act Concerning Thermal Energy Transportation
Companies in the City of Bridgeport
March 17, 2015**

Chairmen Doyle & Reed and Members of the Energy Committee:

The Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice strongly supports HB 6022, An Act Concerning Thermal Energy Transportation Companies in the City of Bridgeport in its original form.

As you may know, one of the Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice's mission is to protect the health and welfare of our urban centers by supporting efforts to reduce fossil power emissions in a responsible manner.

The City of Bridgeport has historically been the home of power generation facilities, wastewater treatment facilities, and a solid waste mass burn facility, and is dissected by a major interstate highway with hundreds of thousands of cars passing through it on a regular basis. This creates significant clean air challenges and places a burden on urban residents who face asthma and other health related impacts because of their proximity to these facilities.

But now we have a chance to do something to mitigate some of these historical inequities by developing an innovative approach to renewable energy generation and create a national model for others to follow by using waste heat as a primary energy source. District Energy is the direction that the world is moving towards. It is highly efficient and quite beneficial to the environment and the constituents we represent. It is anticipated that more than 40 buildings will connect to the system initially, resulting in a 71 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. This translates to over 9,500 tons of carbon dioxide removed from our air each year. As the system expands, the air quality benefits will continue to increase.

The economic benefits to the City of Bridgeport are equally substantial; over \$ 50 million dollars in direct economic benefit during construction and the creation of 20 full time jobs to start. And the system will reduce energy costs for district customers and serve as a catalyst for economic growth; several of those customers will be federal, state and city buildings. Most of the customers presently use natural gas for heating, some use oil. As District Energy customers, they will effectively decouple from gas, which adds capacity back to a constrained gas marketplace. The system will also provide chilled water for air conditioning as well. The water is chilled during off peak hours, stored, and then deployed during peak hours, which conserves and reduces electricity consumption.

The sources of heat for the hot water system are existing class 1 and 2 generating facilities. They include a waste to energy plant and several fuel cells. The operating efficiency of these plants increases dramatically. Using waste heat that would otherwise be vented into the atmosphere is a desirable goal that we can achieve in Bridgeport.

HB 6022 was originally submitted giving the Bridgeport Thermal Energy District Class 1 Renewable Energy Credits for the thermal energy produced. The current draft requires PURA to open a docket on the matter and gives no surety of outcome. We encourage you to consider the original legislation as the uncertainty and delay of REC support threatens the project from moving forward and providing the benefits it needs to attract customers.

This cutting edge approach to energy generation is within our grasp and with REC support, the project will likely start construction in 2016. Bridgeport has become a national model for green energy and business development and is rapidly being transformed into one of America's most sustainable cities. This project will be a national model for others to follow if this committee and the entire General Assembly demonstrate the leadership needed to make Connecticut a model for renewable energy development. It is a win-win-win . . . economically, environmentally and socially and we at CCEJ ask for your support of the legislation as originally proposed.

Most respectfully,

Sharon Lewis
Executive Director
Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice